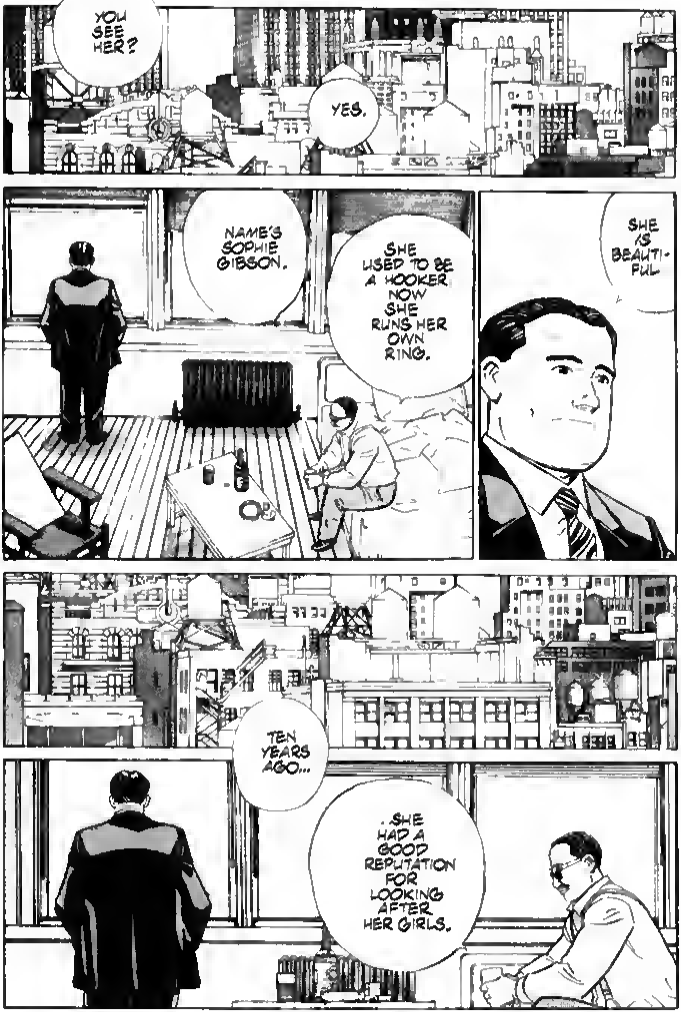
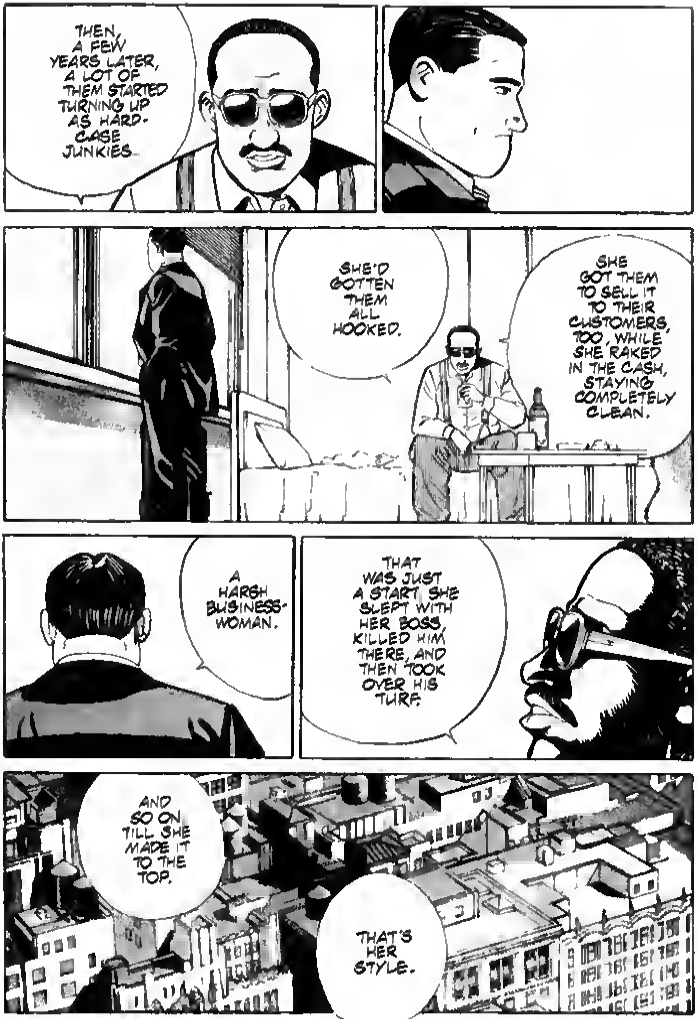
Chapter 6: NECKLACE

"YOU TELLING ME THAT'S HIP?
"IT AIN'T FOR ME.
"IT REMINDS ME TOO MUCH OF THE WETLANDS.
"THE JUNGLE-BOOTS NIGHT-MARE."
TAH
TAH
TAH
TAH
TAH

TAK
TAK
RRRRRRRRRRRR
FWIK
PHOO
HEY BRO, I GOT A JOB FOR YOU.

CHUD


YOU SEE HER?
YES.
NAME'S SOPHIE GIBSON.
SHE USED TO BE A HOOKER. NOW SHE RUNS HER OWN RING.
SHE IS BEAUTIFUL
TEN YEARS AGO...
SHE HAD A GOOD REPUTATION FOR LOOKING AFTER HER GIRLS.


THEN, A FEW YEARS LATER, A LOT OF THEM STARTED TURNING UP AS HARD-CASE JUNKIES.
SHE'D GOTTEN THEM ALL HOOKED.
SHE GOT THEM TO SELL IT TO THEIR CUSTOMERS, TOO, WHILE SHE RAKED IN THE CASH, STAYING COMPLETELY CLEAN.
A HARSH BUSINESS-WOMAN.
THAT WAS JUST A START. SHE SLEPT WITH HER BOSS, KILLED HIM THERE, AND THEN TOOK OVER HIS TURF.
AND SO ON TILL SHE MADE IT TO THE TOP.
THAT'S HER STYLE.

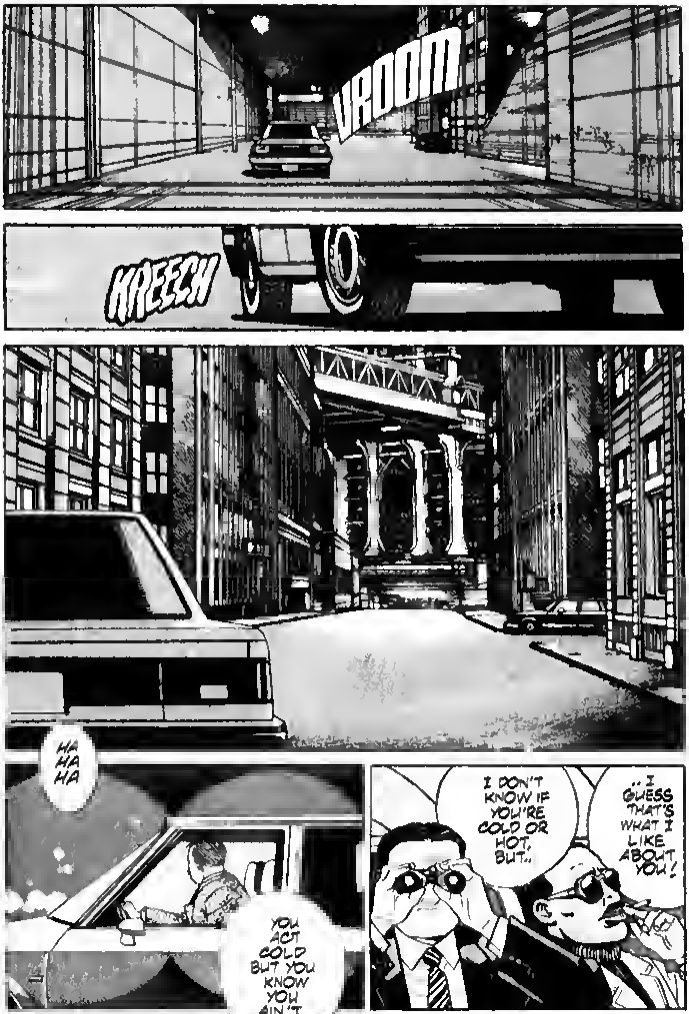
WHY DO YOU WANT HER DEAD?
SIX MONTHS AGO THERE WAS A COCAINE-WAR SHOOTOUT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.
I REMEMBER.
IN NEW JERSEY
THE CHILD WHO WAS ACCIDENTALLY SHOT... WAS MINE.
...
I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T DO THIS JOB.
WHY?
I CAN'T PROVE IF SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE OR NOT.
BUT I SAW HER DO IT!

LET THE POLICE HANDLE THIS.
THEY CAN'T BE BOTHERED.
THEY'RE TOO BUSY COVERING THEIR OWN ASSES.
HERE'S A CHECK FOR TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS
USE THAT MONEY TO RAISE ANOTHER KID.
...
I'M NOT A VIGILANTE.
KLAKETA KLAKETA
I SEE.
SO YOU TURNED DOWN THE JOB?
YES.
I FOLLOWED HIM AROUND LATER. HE SAID HE WAS FROM JERSEY BUT HE HAD VERMONT PLATES.

HE WAS LYING.
I HAVE TO GET BACK TO MY PAINTING.
I DON'T THINK SO...
...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FOR A WHILE.
...
HE WON'T GIVE UP. HE WANTS HER DEAD.
I COULD SMELL THE MURDER ON HIM.
I KNOW.
BETTE MIDLER
69-70 QUANG TRI
I'M SORRY, BUT...
...I'M NOT CONVINCED.
WAIT!

FWA
SLISH SLISH SLISH
ARICH

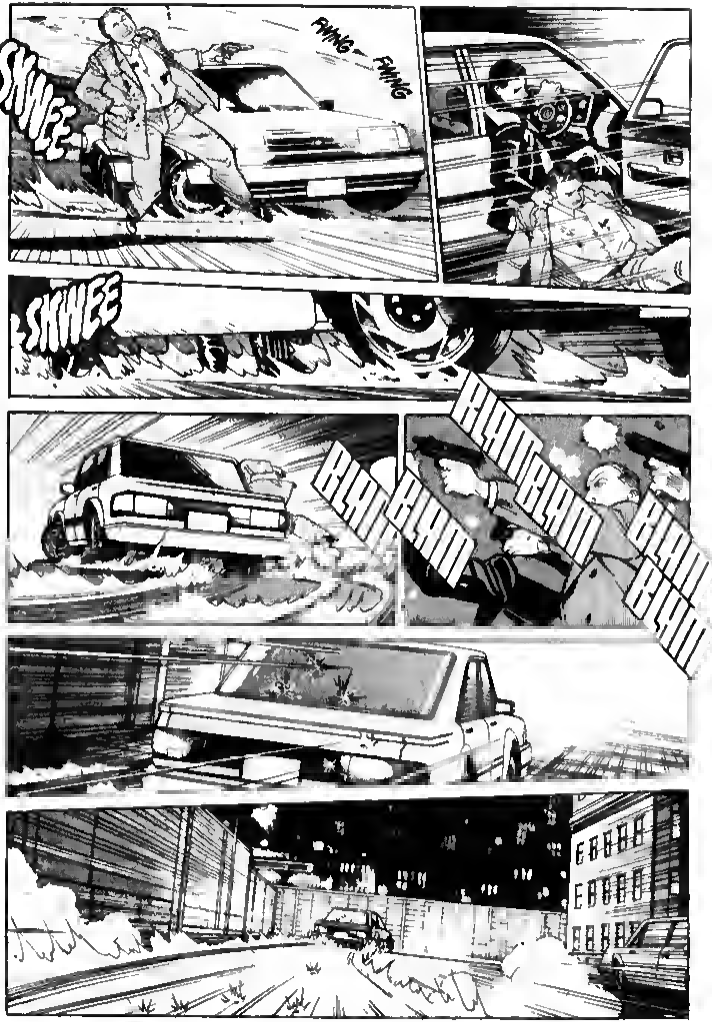
CHAK
IT WAS THE SILENCE OF MISERY.
WE'RE ALL SLAVES TO SOMETHING.
FWIK
...
Phoo.
AFTER I LOST MY EYES IN NAM, I FINALLY SAW THE WAY THE WORLD REALLY WORKS.
A HORSE WITH ITS ASS ON FIRE IS GOING TO KICK UP A SHITSTORM.
...
VIETNAM 69-70 QUANG TRI
IT'S GOING DOWN TONIGHT BY THE EAST RIVER.


VROOM
KREECH
HA HA HA
YOU ACT COLD BUT YOU KNOW YOU AIN'T.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE COLD OR HOT, BUT...
...I GUESS THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU!

SHE'S HERE.
HEY...
...YOU GOTTA HAVE A TASTE FOR LIFE.
THE BONES OF OUR PAST ...
...CARRY VIOLENCE.
BITTER OLD BONES AND BLOOD.
BLOOD IS BLOOD WHEN IT POURS OUT.
YOU CAN'T DENY YOUR EMOTIONS.
WHOA!
WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

THAT'S HIM OUTSIDE HIS CAR.
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
IT'S OBVIOUS.
HE'S GOING TO SHOOT AT A MAFIA BOSS WITH A HUNDRED DOLLAR PISTOL.
IDIOT!
COUNTRY BOY.
TCH!
FING

SKREE
SOPHIE!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM


SKWEE
FWING - FWING
SKWEE
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

I COULD TAKE YOU TO A DOCTOR I KNOW, BUT...
KOFF
...IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE.
FORGET ABOUT IT.

I'M... SATISFIED.

WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

...IN LOVE.

KOFF
SOPHIE AND I WERE...

WE GREW UP TOGETHER, IN A SMALL TOWN IN VERMONT. IT SEEMS LIKE SUCH A LONG TIME AGO.
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GET MARRIED.
KOFF
ONE WINTER FIFTEEN YEARS AGO...
...SOPHIE MET THIS FELLOW FROM NEW YORK WHO WAS ON VACATION SKIING.
KRACK
KRACK
KRACK
KRACK

DING DONG
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
SHE BETRAYED ME.
BY THE TIME HER PARENTS FOUND HER LETTER, SHE WAS ALREADY GONE.

SO YOU'RE GETTING BACK AT HER AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?
KOFF
N-NO...
LATELY ...
...A LOT OF GIRLS HAVE BEEN LEAVING OUR TOWN FOR NEW YORK BUT THEY NEVER COME BACK.
THEY TURN UP AS HOOKERS, JUNKIES, OR DEAD.
THEY'D ALL FALLEN IN LOVE WITH SOPHIE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE ENDED UP LIKE THIS.
BUT I COULDN'T LET HER DO THIS ANYMORE.
WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME?
I WAS ASHAMED.
LIFE IN VERMONT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY.
KOF

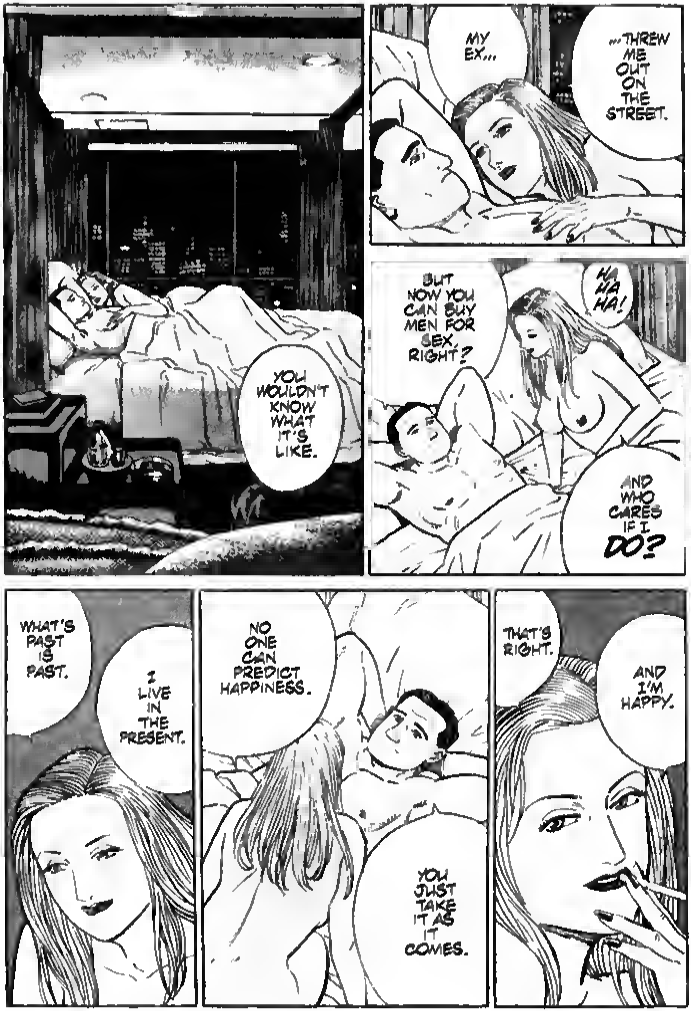
TAKE IT EASY, MAN.
KOFF
SHE DIDN'T REMEMBER ME.
...I STILL LOVE HER.
PLEASE...
HER EYES WERE FILLED WITH HATRED, GLARING AT ME AS IF I WERE SOME STRAY DOG.
KOFF
BUT...
...GIVE THIS TO HER.
...
SH- SHE REALLY...
...USED TO BE...
KOFF
...RATHER KIND.
...

WHAT RE YOU GONNA DO NOW ?
BENKEI ?
I'M GOING TO GIVE HER THE NECK-LACE.
HA HA!
OF COURSE.
YOU KNOW, YOU LUCKED OUT WITH THIS ONE.
I COULDN'T SAY IT IN FRONT OF HIM, BUT I HEAR SHE'S GOT A THING FOR ASIAN MEN.

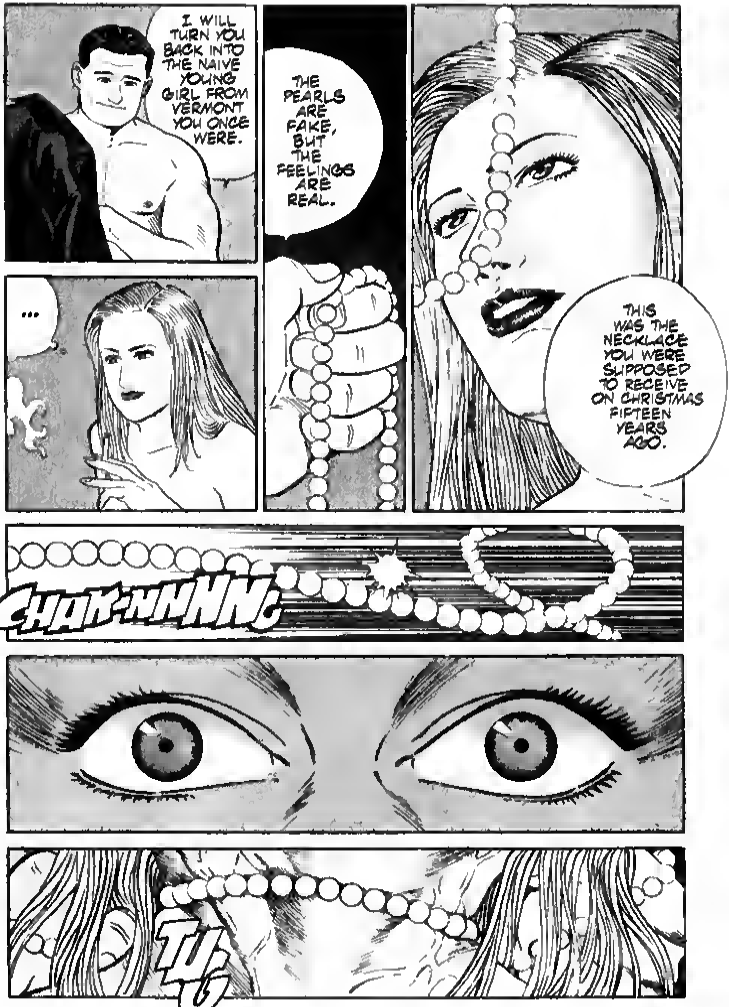
HEY...
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
HOW!
IS THAT FOR ME?
NO. FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.
AH, MAN!
THIS WOULDN'T SUIT YOU. IT'S STRINGED WITH PIANO WIRE.
TO STRANGLE SOMEBODY WITH LOVE.
OH. UH, WHY?

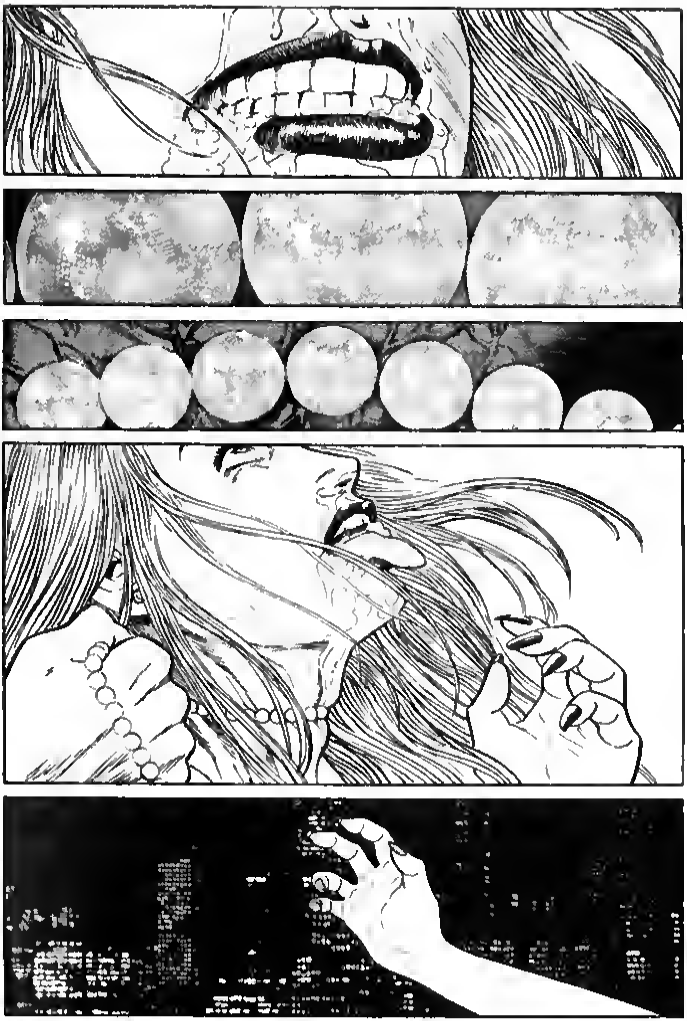
CHEERS!
YOU'RE A COOL ONE.
MOST MEN PEE IN THEIR PANTS WHEN THEY SEE MY PLACE.

WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SO RICH?
OR BECAUSE OF THOSE GUYS OUTSIDE THE DOOR?
HEY!
GIMME A BREAK!
I LIKE...
...ASIAN MEN...
...WHO AREN'T SLAVES.


YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE.
MY EX...
...THREW ME OUT ON THE STREET.
BUT NOW YOU CAN BUY MEN FOR SEX, RIGHT?
HA HA HA!
AND WHO CARES IF I DO?
WHAT'S PAST IS PAST.
I LIVE IN THE PRESENT.
NO ONE CAN PREDICT HAPPINESS.
YOU JUST TAKE IT AS IT COMES.
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND I'M HAPPY.

IT'S EASY TO DECEIVE YOURSELF AND FORGET OTHERS GAIN AND SUFFER FROM YOUR ACTIONS.
HAPPINESS MIGHT BE BEAUTIFUL WHEN IT'S YOURS.
...
BUT AS SOON AS YOU STOP SENSING HOW OTHERS FEEL YOU BEGIN TO ROT.
FUKI
HA HA HA!
HA HAHA HA!
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN CHANGE ME, THEN CHANGE ME, MR. ZEN MASTER.
I'LL PUT A SPELL ON YOU, THEN.
HOW NICE.


I WILL TURN YOU BACK INTO THE NAIVE YOUNG GIRL FROM VERMONT YOU ONCE WERE.
THE PEARLS ARE FAKE, BUT THE FEELINGS ARE REAL.
THIS WAS THE NECKLACE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE ON CHRISTMAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.
...
CHAK-NNNNG
TUG



HEY, BROTHER
CAN YOU SEE THOSE TWO?
VIETNAM
THEY'RE BACK IN VERMONT
...LYING UNDER THE SNOW, ASLEEP IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS.